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ABSTRACT

This report describes two different applications of the Classroom Activity Record (CAR), an observational approach to capturing contextual features of classrooms. Subject matter content, instructional format, quantity and quality of teacher-student interaction, sequence of routines and events, and student attention and engagement among other features are captured with the system. Two studies are presented that used different applications of the CAR. The first is a research study conducted in Tennessee (Project STAR) which focused on the effects of class size on student achievement and teachers' managerial and instructional behaviors. Descriptive information provided by the CAR allowed fine-grained analysis of the differences in instruction in larger and smaller classes. A sample of these findings are presented. The second study involved the use of the system in training observers to use a beginning teacher assessment instrument, the Kansas Internship Assessment Inventory (KIAI). Information from the CAR-aided trainers in diagnosing training needs as well as clarifying behaviors and behavioral indicators on the KIAI. Guidelines for using the CAR are included in the appended material. (Author/JD)

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Capturing Classroom Context: The Observation System as Lens for Assessment

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Capturing classroom context:
The observation instrument as lens for assessment

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The classroom observation is probably the single most important element in systems that assess the competence of classroom teachers. Procedures for implementing the classroom observation vary almost as much as the observation instruments themselves. Yet, important decisions about relative teacher competence are made from the data obtained. Judgments are made often without reference to the actual structure of the observations or to the school or classroom contexts in which they are conducted. Often valuable information regarding the context of the classroom observation is lost and is not retrievable. The loss of this information can hamper the systematic implementation of assessment models which in turn impact: teacher performance assessment for a variety of purposes such as: licensure, certification, merit pay, career ladder and hire.

While classroom observation has become and increasingly important tool in both research and performance assessment, the methodology for classroom observation has had little systematic discussion and research (c.f. Evertson & Green 1986; Fassnacht 1982). Nearly twenty-five years ago Medley and Mitzel (1963) argued for methods of systematizing observations so that an accurate record of observed behaviors could be obtained. More recently Soar, Medley and Coker (1983) made the charge that current practices are unreliable, biased, subjective and based on irrelevancies. Clearly, differing purposes lead to diverse methods of observing classroom behavior and these methods also vary in systematization and formality. Observations do not take place in a vacuum;

they are a function of environments -- social, psychological, political, organizational, and physical. All of these environments co-occur and impact what happens in the classroom (Brophy & Evertson, 1978; Evertson & Veldman, 1981). Observational methods that are sensitive to these contexts and are still efficient enough to be used in large numbers of classrooms are extremely rare. In setting policy and establishing practices for sound observation, it is critical that these methods be able to capture contextual variations while at the same time be systematically executed and specific to the purpose(s) of the evaluation.

Traditionally, the instrumentation used for the classroom observation is usually limited to: brief narratives, rating scales, and checklists. The Guttman scale, semantic differential, and other scales enjoy some popularity, but the Likert (summative ratings) are the most frequently used (Borich, 1977). Unfortunately, the science of measurement lags behind the field of teacher observation (Sweeney & Manatt, 1986). Numerous problems exist from using these scales such as: the response alternatives on ordinal scales are unequal; the lower end of the rating scale denotes unacceptable performance which contributes to the tendency that raters use the upper end of the scale; the procedures mechanize the process; these methods influence evaluators to make assessments on the classroom observation without careful reflection and analysis; and rater bias is enhanced. These methods suffer from a lack of specificity with respect to the context of the classroom observation, level and quality of performance (Shulman, 1987) and, therefore, they greatly contribute to measurement error.

The purpose of this paper is to describe a systematic observation procedure called the Classroom Activity Record (CAR) (Evertson, 1987), which

was designed to minimize the problems previously detailed and more accurately record the events of the classroom observation (Note 1). Using the activity record allows data to be collected during a classroom observation in a standardized manner for evaluation as well as research purposes. The purpose of the CAR is to provide a structure for recording classroom activities and events with documentation of the occurrence of classroom behaviors. A series of codes describing 15 instructional and content-related activities is used to capture the instructional and managerial context. These codes are descriptors of typical class activities, such as content development, transitions, individual seatwork. Relevant descriptive notes are also recorded simultaneously on the CAR during the observation. Classroom interaction between the students and teachers may be included as well as quantitative counts of students' attention levels. Contextual information regarding subject matter, grade level, school district, school, teacher, observer, date, and lesson are recorded at the top of the CAR. The CAR may be implemented with a variety of observation systems including those requiring specimen descriptions, anecdotal records, critical incident recording, and on-line checklists of relevant behaviors. (See Appendix A for a detailed description of the CAR).

This paper presents two very different applications of the CAR. The first application is a research study conducted in Tennessee (Project STAR) which focuses on the effects of class size on student achievement and teachers' managerial and instructional behaviors. The second application describes the use of the CAR with a beginning teacher assessment instrument, the Kansas Internship Assessment Inventory (Poggio, Burry, & Glasnapp, 1987), currently being piloted.

Study 1: Describing Classroom Activities (Project STAR)

Capturing the subtle instructional and contextual features of classrooms is often a difficult, if not impossible, task if observation systems do not include information about the content being taught. The Tennessee class size project (Project STAR) was initiated to test experimentally the efficacy of specific teacher training, use of in-class aides, and variations in class size on student achievement, self-concept, and other attitudes toward school. Fifty-two second grade classrooms (in 13 schools) from the total sample were observed using the CAR during math and reading to determine the effects of small (N=15) vs. regular (N=22-25) vs. regular classes with an in-class aide on teaching behaviors and tasks. The combination of qualitative and quantitative information allowed testing of hypotheses regarding changes or modifications of teachers' classroom practices, teachers' accessibility to students, and the quantity and quality of content covered for the three types of classes.

This particular approach to observation was selected for several reasons. First, past research on the effects of class size on teacher and student interactions, of quality of contacts, amount of time spent in academic vs. non-academic activities were far from clear regarding the precise teaching practices that varied for classes of differing size. Recent research by Bourke (1986) documented relationships between class size and student achievement and classroom practices. Bourke found that class grouping, the number and type of interactions between teacher and students, teacher questioning, homework practices, and the management of classroom noise were related to class size. We wished to replicate Bourke's work using a system that would capture subtle variations in teaching practice and classroom context. Investigators in Project STAR were concerned not only with the characteristics of these three

types of classes, but with how teachers would teach differently as a result of having their class sizes reduced or of having an in-class teacher aide. It was essential then to describe what was happening in these classes in a way that would shed light not only on the what, but also on the how. It seemed important to take a descriptive approach to the problem.

Second, financial constraints limited observations to four per year (one reading and one math lesson in the fall and one reading and one math lesson in the spring). Spring observations were used as baseline data for the regular and smaller classes included in the study the next school year. Because of the limited opportunities to observe, it was essential to capture as much fine-grained detail as possible regarding the nature and quality of the lessons, teacher and student behavior, and the content covered.

Third, observers were located throughout the state and came to Nashville only for training. Less than half the observers resided in the area which added to the problem of maintaining observer agreement and reliability. Observation systems that required a high degree of clerical speed and accuracy or a high degree of "maintenance" from project staff were rejected in favor of the CAR system that would allow observers to record events verbatim and to capture in narrative the flow of events in classrooms along with the collection of other types of quantitative data. If observers were unsure how to count certain events, the narrative descriptions offered a way to record the behaviors and the context in which they occurred.

Observer training:

Observers came to Nashville for a two day training session prior to Spring data collection. They were given manuals describing the system and the data collection procedures. They practiced using the system by recording

scripted dialogues, contributing their own dialogues for practice, and coding videotapes. Throughout training guidelines for writing "descriptively" rather than "judgmentally" or "evaluatively" were emphasized. At the conclusion of training observers used the system to record a master videotape and criterion-referenced agreement was computed. Agreement with the coded master tape was high -- %85 or above.

Follow-up contacts with the observers and data from the Spring, 1987, data collection were used to assess observer reliablility. Observers reported little difficulty in using the system since the narrative descriptions allowed them to record what they saw and to explain any anomolies that might affect their other quantitative data. Prior to Fall, 1987, data collection observers returned for another two day session. Approximately half of this time was used to talk through classroom events that affected what they recorded. It is important to note that although reliability was high, observers' scores were not perfect. The primary threat to reliability appeared to be that observers would fail to record events, not that they recorded them erroneously.

Selected findings from Project STAR fall data:

Data analyses are in progress; however, selected findings will be reported to illustrate the use of the CAR. Key variables are shown in Table 1 below. These variables are derived from the observation coding sheet which provides for recording teacher-to-student contacts and student-to-teacher contacts in either behavioral, academic, or procedural contexts (see Apprendix A). The number of contacts in each category is summed and divided by sixty minutes to obtain a rate per class hour. Proportions of time spent in each activity are calculated by computing the minutes spent in the activity and dividing by 60 minutes. Effect sizes were then calculated for small vs.

regular classes as well as f-tests and t-tests for differences in variances and means. Variables with effect sizes of .40 or higher are reported. For the purposes of illustration the comparisons between smaller and regular classes will be shown for math and reading.

Insert Table 1 about here

The descriptive notes from the CAR help to understand just how some of these frequencies function in the context of the classroom. For example, the increased rate of student-initiated contacts with the teacher in the small classes in both reading and math lessons could have been interpreted in several ways. One goal of reduced class size is to allow students more frequent and high quality contact with the teacher. An examination of the descriptive notes tells us that student-initiated contacts functioned in three predominant ways in the smaller classes. The first and most frequent was that students were contacting the teacher for clarification on assignments and for help in getting started on assignments. Second, students were calling out answers to questions that were open to the whole class. Third, students were contacting the teacher privately for help as s/he moved around the room monitoring seatwork; and fourth, but much less frequent, students volunteered opinions and comments about content of interest to them in group discussions.

A second finding clarified by examining the descriptive notes is the location of those "vulnerable" places in lesson flow that contribute to student off-task behavior. By examining the descriptive notes for those incidents for which 15% or more of the students were off-task, we found that the majority of incidents when students were not attending were those times when there were transitions between activities (no-task), when the teacher was with a small

group in reading and the rest of the groups were "on their own doing seatwork," or when teacher was interacting with or monitoring one or two students. This information which came from the Spring baseline data was used in deciding part of the focus for the teacher training conducted in the summer. Trained teachers classes in the Fall showed very little off-task behavior.

These two illustrations serve as examples of how the descriptive information from the CAR was used to interpret and to redesign the data collection and training in Project STAR. Other findings from the project will be reported elsewhere.

Study 2: Systematic Observations for the KIP

Observing and then evaluating the work performance of an individual are two different activities according to Landy and Farr (1983). The Kansas Internship Assessment Inventory and User's Manual (Poggio, Burry & Glasnapp, 1987) separate these two important activities using standardized procedures for observing and evaluating the competence of beginning teachers. The sequence of steps for doing a classroom observation is an adaptation of Landy & Farr's (1983) performance assessment model: 1) observe, 2) record, 3) retrieve, 4) analyze, and 5) evaluate. An adaptation of the Classroom Activity Record (CAR) (Evertson, 1987) is used by the observer to proceed through all five of these steps.

The original Kansas Internship Assessment inventory is comprised of 112 behaviors which are to be observed by assessment sets using the observation procedures described in this paper. Trainers and classroom observers have been successfully trained to use the assessment system and the CAR. Results of implementing these procedures with over 120 observers during the 1987-1988 statewide implementation of the Inventory will be discussed. In addition,

examples of how the standardized procedures and the CAR have been implemented will be included in the paper.

Program Description

The Kansas Internship Program is to be mandated in 1989-90. It is currently in the pilot stages and is a systematic, developmental, competency-based approach to the induction period of teaching. According to the state plan, the program has two purposes: first, to assist the beginning teacher (intern teacher) in acquiring or improving teaching knowledge and skills which are essential to successful entry into the profession; second, to protect the public interest by establishing that the intern teacher can perform at an acceptable level of professional practice. The assistance committee, which traditionally consists of an administrator and a senior teacher, is charged with the responsibility of assessing and assisting the beginning teacher. Assessment procedures are identical for both members of the assistance committee, and the classroom observation is the primary method of data collection.

Instrumentation, Methods and Procedures

For the Pilot project (1987-88), the Kansas Internship Assessment Inventory (Poggio, Burry & Glasnapp, 1987) consists of 112 behavioral statements, each of which is accompanied by a behavioral description (see Figure 1). Because of the large number of behaviors to be assessed, each assistance team (administrator, senior teacher, and intern teacher) was assigned to one of three groups (X, Y, or Z). Each group was then responsible during a period of seven months for assessing one third of the behavioral statements. Behavioral statements were then clustered into assessment sets, each consisting of approximately six behaviors. Administrators and senior

teachers observed behaviors simultaneously in the classroom of the intern teacher.

The sequence for conducting a classroom observation as stated in the Kansas Internship Assessment Inventory User's Manual (Poggio, Burry, & Glasnapp, 1987) is 1) observe, 2) record, 3) retrieve, 4) analyze, and 5) evaluate. These procedures, when followed correctly, allow for the evaluator (observer) to process the observation and form a judgment. Too often these steps are not separated and judgments are made without proper thought and often without documentation. If information is captured at all, it is usually in the form of frequency counts taken on behavior(s), dichotomous ratings for the presence or absence of behavior(s), or rating scale checklists. These systems provide a limited perspective on what actually transpired, thus limiting the evaluator's information for making a judgment. Another problem with these kinds of systems is that the observation sequence is broken and often steps are eliminated which increases the probability of measurement error. The precision of the classroom observation requiring a judgement is lost when the steps in the observation sequence are not followed sequentially.

In order to standardize the classroom observation and to facilitate the steps of the observation sequence, the Classroom Activity Record (CAR) (Evertson, 1987) was adapted and used as illustrated in Figure 1. Demographic information is to be recorded at the top; the behavioral statements to be observed are listed in the middle; and a sample of the CAR form appears next. The CAR provides a structure for systematically focusing a recording of classroom activities, events and for documenting the details of the specific behaviors. Behavioral statements are coded according to the Kansas Internship Assessment Inventory. Activities are coded to preserve the context of the

lesson. Cogent descriptive notes are recorded on the CAR by the observer during the classroom observation in order to focus the observer's attention on details of the behaviors. Only information pertinent to the behavioral statements in the designated assessment set is to be recorded, thereby focusing the observer's attention on the in-depth details for five or more behavioral statements.

Insert Figure 1 about here

The purpose of this study is to examine data on the unique steps of the systematic classroom observation procedure. It is necessary to note that the judgment made for each behavior is either "standard" or "below standard." In order for the evaluator to arrive at a judgment, s/he must (1) observe, (2) record the behaviors of the intern, teacher and students (3) retrieve this information using the written record (CAR), (4) analyze the information all before (5) making an evaluation decision.

During training, evaluators were instructed to take accurate descriptive notes to follow the directions detailed in the User's Manual, and to examine their descriptive notes during the (4) the analysis steps for accuracy given the observation criteria. Criteria for each behavior were outlined in the behavior descriptions in the Inventory (see Figure 2).

Insert Figure 2 about here

Classroom Activity Records (CAR) from 18 assistance committees (18 administrators and 18 matched senior teachers) were randomly selected from this year's pilot study participants. Descriptive notes on the CAR's were analyzed for quality and for the evaluator's ability to capture relevant and accurate data on the behavioral statements.

Descriptive notes on the CAR's were examined for each of the 13 behavioral statements using the following procedures. The examination process was based on the researcher's rating of the descriptive notes. First, the number of descriptive notes were totaled for each behavioral statement. Second, each descriptive note was rated either "0" for lack of descriptive quality or "1) for having an adequate description. For example, a descriptive note written for the behavioral statement "establishes rapport with students" was "gets students to sing." This descriptive note was given a "0" for quality because the description was not detailed enough to provide a clear picture of what was occurring in the classroom. It was also rated "0) for accuracy becau e it did not describe anything relevant to the behavioral description (criterion). However, on the other hand, the descriptive note "students took turns listening and talking" was rated "1" for quality and "1" for accuracy, according to criteria the same behavioral statement.

An analysis of the descriptive notes of the administrators and senior teachers served as a validity check on the use of the CAR for focused classroom observations. The following question is foremost: "Do evaluators in the Kansas Internship Program capture adequate and relevant information on which to base a judgment?" Other important research questions of interest are (1) Is there a difference in the quality and accuracy of administrators and senior teachers documentation of the intern teacher's behavior? and (2) Is there a difference in the quality and accuracy of the documentation recorded on different behavioral statements? The answers to these questions provide documentation to support the validity of the steps of the observation sequence as well as the procedure.

Systematic Analysis

Eighteen matched pairs of administrators and senior teachers were

analyzed across the following 13 behaviors:

1.	Reflects an understanding of learning theory in planning and instruction.	
2.	Is careful to focus student attention on important points in class lessons.	
3.	Encourages questions and discussion from all students using effective questioning patterns and techniques.	Group X
4.	Reteaches concepts/skills students are not learning.	
5.	Summarizes or achieves closure.	
6.	Answers content questions asked by students.	
7.	Is receptive and responsive to pupil initiated dialogue when appropriate.	Group Y
8.	Shows patience with or empathy for learners who need additional time for explanation.	
9.	Communicates and fosters a respect for learning.	
10.	Establishes clear lines of communication and interaction with students.	
11.	Establishes rapport with students.	Group Z
12.	Inspires students by example.	
13.	Develops in students a consideration of the rights, feelings, and ideas of others.	

Matched pairs of administrators and senior teachers were randomly selected from the pilot study participants. Data were gathered from November, 1987, through January, 1988. Two-way analyses of variance were done on an

assessment set of behaviors from groups x, y and z blocked by professional membership (administrators and senior teachers). Both the quality of the descriptions and the accuracy of the descriptions were analyzed across an assessment set of behaviors for each of the three groups.

Means and standard deviations for the quality of the descriptions are listed in Table 2 and for the accuracy of the descriptions in Table 3.

Insert Tables 2 & 3 about here

Table 4 illustrates the analysis of variance for the quality of the behavioral descriptions. Separate analyses were done for each assessment group, blocked by professional membership, across teaching behaviors. Note there were no statistically significant F tests for evaluators, behaviors, or the evaluator behavior interaction for any of the assessment groups. Table 5 illustrates the analysis of variance for the accuracy of the behavioral descriptions. The same procedures were applied. Results were very similar: there were no statistically significant F tests for evaluators, behaviors, or the evaluator behavior interaction.

Insert Tables 4 & 5 about here

Conclusion

The use of descriptive notes combined with the category coding used in Study 1 (Project STAR) has enabled the investigators to understand the lesson to lesson variations and how those variations affect the meaning of the categories. For example, student initiated contacts make little interpretive sense without information about how these come about, why, for what purpose, and to whom. Information about when off-task rates are high provide insights

into the features of particular tasks and activities that alert students or do not. This information has also been useful in designing the teacher training program that accompanies the Project STAR investigation.

In Study 2 (Kansas Internship Assessment Program), the analysis of variance results indicate no significant differences in the quality or the accuracy of the senior teachers' and administrators' behavioral descriptions. Clearly, there are no statistically significant differences in either the quality or the accuracy in the manner in which administrators and senior teachers observe and describe the behavior of the intern teacher. This study documents that, with proper procedures and training, administrators and experienced teachers can observe and document behavioral descriptions without group variation in either quality or accuracy. The fact that there were no significant differences in description quality or description accuracy across behaviors and also no interaction between evaluators and behaviors, suggests that the observation and documentation procedures are being done consistently for all behaviors. It is interesting to note that although there are no significant differences, the means and standard deviations illustrated in Tables 1 & 2 do have some variation. Also, some of the means, particularly the means of the accuracy of the description, are somewhat low. This suggests that there is a need for the observers (administrators and senior teachers) to become more familiar with the criteria (behavioral descriptions). Training procedures on the behavioral descriptions (criteria) needs to be fine tuned.

Most importantly the results of these studies suggest that the CAR and systems similar to the CAR, systems that require observers to document the behavioral incidents that lead to judgments of the use or non-use of a given behavior, can have distinct advantages over procedures not requiring

documentation in reducing measurement error, spotting training needs, and assessing accuracy of judgments.

Both studies document how a standardized set of observation directions and specified detailed procedures can facilitate both research and statewide assessment models. These procedures ultimately have implications for research, policy, and practice. Without sound observation methods that capture the important aspects of the instructional, organizational, and social contexts in which teaching occurs, the results of classroom observations can be misleading and, at worse, erroneous. Evaluation based on such results lacks reliability and validity and can, therefore, be liable. Research results can also be confounded and so decontextualized that an accurate picture of classroom events, sequences of instruction, or the quality of content presentations, cannot be obtained. Both of these studies are built on a research-based tool and are implemented with systematic standardized procedures. As such these procedures provide a useful model for researchers educators and policy makers in the utilization of classroom observation. It should be kept in mind, however, that systems such as this one are best used in combination with other methods of assessing contextual features of schooling -- the values, intentions, plans, and goals of teachers bear heavily on the meanings one draws from what is observed. Greater care in defining the context in which teachers do their work is a step toward understanding the uniqueness of each teaching event.

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Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations for Observation System Variables by Class Type (Small vs. Regular) and Subject (Reading vs. Math)

	Reading				Math			
	Sm (N=23)		Reg (N=17)		Sm		Reg	
	X	SD	X	SD	X	SD	X	SD
Variables from CAR								
Time in class activities by type: (%/hour)								
1. Content development	.21	.4	.40	.7	.40	.24	.44	.15
2. Directions for assignments	.01	.04	.04	.08	.05++	.11	.02	.03
3. Individual seatwork	.07++	.14	.02	.05	.15	.15	.15	.14
4. Administrative routines	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.03	.02	.07
5. Transitions	.03+	.06	.01	.03	.00	.02	.00	.00
6. All academic activities	.97	.05	.99+	.03	.76	.22	.78	.20
Types of Teacher-initiated contacts								
7. Teacher-initiated contacts/hr.	61.5	28.5	63.5	23.4	66.3	43.1	57.4	26.3
8. Questions to students/hr.	36.2	21.6	35.3	17.9	37.4	37.7	29.4	23.1
9. Behavioral contacts/hr.	4.8	3.7	6.5	4.9	5.5	3.8	8.6+	7.4
10. Individual contacts/hr.	71.2	32.5	68.8	26.1	75.5+	44.7	62.9	28.2
Types of Student-initiated contacts								
11. Student-initiated contacts/hr.	9.7	9.1	7.2	6.4	8.9+	8.5	5.5	6.9
12. Questions/hr.	5.2	4.9	3.9	4.1	6.7+	6.8	3.1	5.1
13. Comments/hr.	4.4	5.6	3.3	3.4	2.6	3.2	2.4	3.0

	Sm		Reg		Sm		Reg	
	X	SD	X	SD	X	SD	X	SD
Variables from CAR (cont'd)								
14. Academic contacts/hr.	6.8	6.5	4.9	4.8	7.0*+	7.4	3.3	4.0
Proportions								
15. Contacts resulting in praise (of total contacts)	1.3	2.8	1.1	2.0	3.8+	6.6	1.5	2.9
16. % Contacts resulting in criticism (of tot. contacts)	2.0	2.9	4.0+	4.1	2.0	2.3	2.6	3.4
17. % Academic contacts (of all contacts)	79.2	15.0	80.5	12.0	68.6	26.9	72.4	21.3
18. % Behavioral contacts (of all contacts)	6.8	5.5	8.9	7.9	7.2	5.9	12.4*+	8.7
19. % of all contacts that are teacher -initiated	88.8	8.7	90.8	7.0	80.1	25.7	91.7++	9.4
Student engagement								
20. % Students definitely on-task	88.1	7.6	82.5*+	9.3	88.4	7.9	83.2+	9.3
21. % Students probably on-task	4.0	3.4	6.1+	3.3	3.1	3.2	4.9+	2.4
22. % Students off-task	5.6	4.5	8.6+	6.2	3.9	4.9	6.0	6.3

* t value significant $\geq$ .05
+ effect size $\geq$ .40;
++ effect size $\geq$ .90

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations for the Quality of the Description

		Group X Behaviors				
		1	2	3	4	5
Senior Teachers	X	100.00	100.00	83.33	83.33	94.50
	S	0.00	0.00	40.82	40.82	13.47
Administrators	X	97.00	92.67	100.00	91.67	80.67
	S	8.16	20.41	0.00	20.41	33.87

		Group Y Behaviors		
		6	7	8
Senior Teachers	X	80.50	91.67	75.00
	S	24.53	20.41	41.83
Administrators	X	76.67	79.17	65.83
	S	20.41	33.29	44.77

		Group Z Behaviors				
		9	10	11	12	13
Senior Teachers	X	75.00	58.33	63.67	83.33	83.00
	S	31.62	49.16	37.13	25.82	26.34
Administrators	X	71.67	63.83	54.60	63.33	70.83
	S	40.21	42.76	45.32	43.20	40.05

Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations for the Accuracy of the Description

Group X Behaviors

		1	2	3	4	5
Senior Teachers	X	69.67	72.17	62.00	83.33	63.83
	S	27.18	44.36	41.47	40.82	42.76
Administrators	X	89.40	72.33	94.50	91.67	55.67
	S	15.22	27.73	13.70	20.07	41.68

Group Y Behaviors

		6	7	8
Senior Teachers	X	76.67	55.50	55.83
	S	25.82	39.00	45.05
Administrators	X	64.16	75.00	44.17
	S	25.88	32.27	29.23

Group Z Behaviors

		9	10	11	12	13
Senior Teachers	X	54.16	41.67	38.83	50.00	78.50
	S	40.05	49.16	49.07	54.77	34.55
Administrators	X	37.67	72.17	37.83	32.83	49.88
	S	38.12	44.36	43.59	42.24	40.91

Table 4. Analysis of Variance on the Quality of Administrators' and Senior Teachers' Descriptions.

	SS	df	MS	F	Dec.
Group X					
Evaluators	211.951	1	211.951	.381	NS
Behaviors	820.147	4	205.037	.369	NS
E x B	1976.958	4	492.240	.885	NS
Within	27804.422	50	556.088		
Group Y					
Evaluators	650.250	1	650.250	.620	NS
Behaviors	1351.738	2	675.869	.643	NS
E x B	118.500	2	59.250	.057	NS
Within	31485.915	30	1049.530		
Group Z					
Evaluators	460.287	1	460.287	.304	NS
Behaviors	3132.472	4	783.118	.518	NS
E x B	1558.733	4	389.683	.258	NS
Within	75625.206	50	1512.504		

Table 5. Analysis of Variance of the Accuracy of Administrators' and Senior Teachers' Descriptions.

	SS	df	MS	F	Dec.
		Group X			
Evaluators	1036.839	1	1036.839	.914	NS
Behaviors	3356.961	4	839.240	.740	NS
E x B	3982.065	4	995.162	.878	NS
Within	56668.056	50			
		Group Y			
Evaluators	21.790	1	21.790	.020	NS
Behaviors	2755.071	2	1377.536	1.303	NS
E x B	1945.303	2	972.652	.920	NS
Within	31708.786	30	1056.956		
		Group Z			
Evaluators	113.026	1	113.026	.058	NS
Behaviors	5674.514	4	1418.629	.731	NS
E x B	6848.521	4	1712.130	.882	NS
Within	97004.521	50	1940.090		

Figure 1. CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR AND ACTIVITY RECORD

Intern Teacher _____ School _____

Subject _____ USD# _____ Grade _____

Observer (circle): Sr. Teacher Admin. Date of Observation: _____

Behaviors being observed (identify by number): _____

Behavioral Statements: Phase II - Schedule X - Inclass Observation #1

B.7 - Reflects an understanding of learning theory in planning and instruction.

C.19 - Is careful to focus student attention on important points in class lessons.

C.20 - Encourages questions and discussion from all students using effective questioning patterns and techniques.

C.21 - Reteaches concepts/skills students are not learning.

C.22 - Summarizes or achieves closure.

BEHV. CODE	ACTIVITY CODE	DESCRIPTIVE NOTES

Figure 2. Example of a behavioral statement and behavioral description.

I.C.3. Provides instruction that maximizes student time on appropriate tasks.

Lessons are prepared and implemented that maximize the amount of student time spent on academic activities. The teacher begins instruction promptly and has established with students classroom procedures to handle instructional routines. Transitions are smooth and the effects of interruptions are minimized. The teacher has a system of classroom rules and consequences that minimize the time lost due to misbehavior. Administrative tasks are handled with minimum loss of instructional time. Students, when finished with a task, are informed as to what to do next and to have the necessary materials. The teacher is alert to non-performers and takes action to get them on task. There are no instances of overdwelling on interruptions or digressions that interfere with the lesson. Evidence that this behavior is not at the standard level is that: (1) students sit idly waiting for others to finish, or for instruction to begin, or for distribution of materials; (2) time lost is because of student misbehavior; or (3) non-instructional tasks are handled in an inefficient manner.

Note 1

The Classroom Activity Record has evolved over a period of time from work done by the first author and colleagues at the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education. The classroom activity codes were developed to capture the contexts in which students were either on- or off-task (Evertson, Emmer, & Clements, & Sanford, 1980). These codes were elaborated and transferred to the coding sheet itself by Emmer, et al., 1981. The final version includes quantitative frequency counts, narrative notes, and activity codes (Evertson, 1987).

Appendix A

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY RECORD

Observation Record for

Project STAR

Developed by

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Center for Education Policy
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Nashville, Tennessee

April, 1987

GUIDELINES FOR USING THE

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY RECORD

The purpose of the Classroom Activity Record (CAR) is to provide a record of a variety of classroom activities and events that are initiated by the teacher or by students during reading and mathematics lessons. We are particularly interested in getting information about: class time use, instructional activities, teacher-student contacts and questions, student engagement in classroom activities, and other important aspects of teacher and student behavior during each observed class meeting.

Each page of the Classroom Activity Record consists of:

I. three columns starting at the left for coding:
   A. recording the activity code or classroom activities that the teacher is engaging in,
   B. recording elapsed time for each activity, and
   C. recording beginning and ending time points.

II. space for recording descriptive notes of activities and behavior.

III. space for recording student engagement ratings (SER's) (i.e. the number of students who are "on-" or "off-task");

IV. categories for coding teacher-student contacts.

Completing the ID Field

The ID field at the top of the Classroom Activity Record should correspond exactly to that on the Student Engagement

Rating form for the same observation. Fill in the blanks asking for:

1. Teacher Number
2. School Number
3. Subject
4. Date
5. No. of students
6. No. of adults
7. Observer Number
8. Number of pages of the record

(Example 1)

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY RECORD

Teacher #_____ School #_____ Subject _____Date _____

# of Ss_____ # of Adults_____ Observer_____Page____of____

Act. Code	Elpsd Time Min Points	Descriptive Notes

Use the code numbers that have been supplied to observers. In the Date blank the observer records the date the observation was conducted. In the Number of Students blank, the observer records the total number of students in attendance in class during the observation. This number should include late arrivals and early departures. In the Number of Adults blank, the observer records the number of adults simultaneously instructing or in charge of students for any major part of the class. This number should not include visitors to the class (parents, etc) unless they are instructing students. For example, if both the teacher and an aide or Student Teacher are interacting with, instructing, or actively monitoring students for all or part of

the class period, the Number of Adults recorded would be "2." However, if the teacher is in charge of the class for half of the period and leaves another adult is in charge of the class for the rest of the period, the Number of Adults would still be "1."

I.A. Activity Codes

There are fifteen categories of classroom activities. Whenever an activity begins, the appropriate code for the activity should be noted in the Activity Code column to the far left of the CAR. The beginning time should be noted in the Time Points column. When the activity category changes again, the new Activity Code is recorded and the Time Point should be noted. The elapsed time spent in the first activity should be noted in the # Minutes column. No activity should be recorded until the class actually begins or the official beginning of the class. At the end of the reading or math lesson write "end" or "dismissal" in the Activity Code column to indicate the end of the final activity. Record the time of this ending in the Time Points column. NOTE: Since numbers in the # Minutes columns are a matter of simple subtraction, these can be completed after the observer leaves the class using the information from Time Point notations and Descriptive Notes. Activity Codes are described below.

Activity Code Categories

Activity Code No.	Explanation
1	Content Development: Teacher Presentation of Content. Teacher is presenting academic content to the whole class. Includes lecture, demonstration, and explanation of academic content. It may also include some questioning or comments from students, but the main function of this activity is informing students, introducing new material, explaining new material, or reviewing previously introduced material.
2	Content Development: Recitation/Discussion. Teacher is providing students practice of skills or review of material. This category include questioning of students by the teacher. It might also include short written tasks, as when teachers ask students to work one problem at their desks to assess understanding during a content development activity. Written tasks or other seatwork must last less than 3 minutes to be included in this category. This code could also include a content-oriented game or board work actively involving 3/4 of the class.
3	Directions for Assignments. Teacher is explaining to the class the exact procedures for doing an assignment, seatwork activity, or homework. This can include headings, numbering, or any information about the form in which the assignment is to be done.
4	Individual Seatwork. Students are working at desks individually. This code includes activities that are content-centered. Brief directions for seatwork or short teacher interruptions of seatwork to explain or clarify directions should be left in seatwork time unless they last more than 1 minute. When the teacher assigns a written task during a content development activity, the written task should be coded as "Seatwork" if it lasts 3 minutes or longer.
5	Pairs or Group Seatwork. Students who are involved in group projects, experiments, or small group tasks. Teacher circulates or monitors from desk.

6 Student Presentation. One or several students present to the class for more than 1 minute. The presentation is planned ahead of time rather than in response to a direct teacher question as in recitation.

7 Small Group Instruction. Teacher works with a group of students (3 or more) for more than 1 minute while the rest of the class is in seatwork. This category takes priority over all others, e.g., don't code seatwork for the other students during this period.

8 Tests. Students work independently a test, quiz, readiness test, or assessment.

9 Procedural/Behavioral Presentation. The teacher presents or reviews classroom procedures or rules. This code should be used any time the teacher institutes and explains classroom procedures or rules governing student behavior. It should also be used when the teacher gives the class extensive feedback on their behavior, or discusses problems relating to student behavior in class, or students' following of classroom procedures. (NOTE: This does not include procedures for doing assignments. These are coded in category 3.)

10 Administrative Routines. Teacher is checking attendance, making announcements, opening or closing routines without academic content, discussing grades, distributing graded papers, recording grades in class, or changing seating. These activities must involve 3/4 of the students. For example, if checking attendance or distributing graded papers involves only the teacher and one or two students, while the rest of the students are doing seatwork, the "Individual Seatwork" code (4) should be used.

11 Checking. The teacher and students are going over seatwork problems, a quiz, or assignment for the purpose of checking/grading it in class. Little or no teacher explanation or review is entailed. The teacher or students announce answers or write them on the board or overhead transparency.

12 Transitions. The teacher and students are involved in activities entailed in changing from one activity to another. Examples include moving between small groups, getting supplies or materials for a different activity, passing papers, and waiting for everyone to get ready, to get quiet, or to find the place. Activity

codes for "Transitions" should not be noted in the Classroom Activity Record when the transition lasts less than 1 minute.

13 Non-academic Activity. Teacher monitoring students in activities such as games, discussions, TV, not related to content of the class.

14 Waiting Time. Two-thirds or more of the class have no assigned task. Either they are finished and have no other assignment or they are just waiting for the next activity.

15 Discipline. Two-thirds or more of the class is involved in some group discipline for misbehavior. For example, teacher may require to put head down on desks for a period of time if they have been too disruptive.

Adapted from: Evertson, Emmer, Sanford & Clements (1980); Emmer, Sanford, Clements & Martin (1981).

I.C. Time Points

Observer should record times in the Time Points column as frequently as possible. At a minimum, times should be noted to correspond to every SER and Activity Code change. In addition, times should be noted for changes of topic, changes of instructional groupings, and major changes of teacher activities during students' seatwork.

II. Descriptive Notes

The Descriptive Notes should describe generally what the teacher is doing and what the students are doing. They include the general topic of study and topic changes, and levels of student cooperation, participation, and extent of work avoidance. If small group instruction is used, the number, size, and activities of the different groups should be briefly described. The notes should have a whole-class focus, that is, they should

describe activities of the class as a whole rather than providing details about only one or several students. To the extent that time allows, the observer should describe problems, sources of problems, or outstanding teacher or student behaviors that would markedly affect how well the teacher is able to manage instruction. For example, instances of teachers monitoring student work or behavior, inconsistent behavior management, giving academic feedback, or rewarding students for academic performance should be described. A brief description of the general classroom appearance and arrangement (teacher's desk, students' desks, posting of rules and assignments) is desirable. The observer should not try to describe the classroom in great detail or record all interactions verbatim. Rather, the objective of the descriptive notes is to produce a coherent and readable record of major classroom activities.

In making the Descriptive Notes, the abbreviations listed below may be used. Because readability is of first importance, other abbreviations or shorthand devices should not be used unless they are defined in the notes.

Standard Abbreviations

T	Teacher
OP	Overhead projector
S	Student
B	Boy
Ss	Students

G	Girl
bb	Bulletin board
=	Equals
cb	Chalk board
~	About, approximately
w/	With
hw	Homework
#	Number
bk	Book
Q	Question
assgn	Assignment
PA	Public address announcement
info	Information
wbk	Workbook

III. Student Engagement Ratings

Student engagement
Time:_____
# of Sts._____
Def. on-task_____
Prob. on-task_____
Off-task_____
Waiting_____

At 5 minute intervals, the observer should complete a Student Engagement Rating (SER). This consists of the time the rating was made, the number of students present in the class at the time, and how many students could be classified as "on-task," "probably on-task," "off-task", or "waiting" (see above). The first SER should be taken at a random number of minutes (1-4) into the class observation. The remaining ratings should be done every 5 minutes thereafter.

Definitely On-task: Students must be complying with whatever tasks or activities the teacher has assigned. Students in this category are either writing, reading, listening, answering questions, talking with the teacher about their work, or

otherwise doing what they are supposed to be doing. The observer has no doubt that the student is engaged.

Probably on-task: Students might be on-task, but the observer is not sure i.e. they may be looking out the window, thinking about a problem, momentarily distracted from work, etc. The observer should classify students in this category when there is some doubt about whether they are complying or not.

Off-task: Students are obviously not engaged in the tasks they are supposed to be accomplishing. They may be wandering around the room, talking to friends, minding someone else's business, etc.

Waiting time: Students classified in this category have finished what they are supposed to be doing and are waiting for the next assignment. They would not be code as "off-task" in this case because there is no task assigned.

NOTE: There are three student engagement (SER) category boxes on each page of the Classroom Activity Record. Depending upon the time intervals the observer may leave some of these blank. Nevertheless, at the end of the observation there should be the required number of ratings filled out across all the sheets (Approx. 10 -11 per hour).

IV. Individual Teacher-Student Contacts

The two groups of columns to the far right of the Classroom Activity Record are used to record the frequency of teacher's

contacts with INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS and students' individual contacts with the teacher. These do not have to correspond line-by-line with the Descriptive Notes. Note: When the teacher asks a question that the whole class or group answers in unison (choral responses) or if the teacher asks a rhetorical question (one with no one designated to answer) these are not counted in the Teacher-Student Contact columns.

The observer first determines who initiated the contact, teacher or student and places a B or G in the appropriate set of columns to indicate whether the student was a boy or girl.

Teacher-Initiated

D	Q	C	Ac	Pr	Beh

Student-Initiated

Q	C	Ac	Pr

In the remainder of the row, the observer makes two additional decisions: (1) how the contact was initiated and (2) the qualitative nature of the contact. If the contact was academic, procedural or behavioral in nature, the observer places a checkmark in column so designated. If the contact was positive (i.e. the student is praised or complimented) the observer places a plus (+) in the column instead of the checkmark. By the same token if the contact was negative in tone (i.e. the student is being reprimanded or criticized) a minus (-) is placed in the column. Neutral statements are coded with a checkmark.

A. TEACHER-INITIATED CONTACTS

Teacher-initiated interactions can occur publicly (i.e.

monitored by the whole class) or privately (i.e. heard only by the student and possibly those sitting most closely around). These interactions give us an idea of how accessible the teacher is to students. It is important to note them in the Descriptive Notes, but it is also important to record the relative quality of these contacts. The categories listed below are some of the ways that teachers deal with students in the classroom. Each category has several examples of what types of interactions are coded there. Also much classroom dialogue is a combination of the categories below. For example, the teacher may ask a question and then direct a student to do something. The observer's code is based on what the first initiation was. If the teacher asks a question first, then a checkmark is placed in the Question (Q) column regardless of what follows. Another checkmark is placed on the next line only if the teacher changes to another student or otherwise ends the interaction. The following combinations of codes are possible with the Teacher-Student Contact columns.

A. Teacher-initiated/Directives(D): Directives are statements that can be taken as commands or orders. Teachers may issue such commands when they want students to be quiet, to return to their work, change their seating, etc. Most of the time the teacher wishes to leave no doubt about what is to be done and who is to do it. The student to whom the directive is intended is usually targeted ahead of time. This column is checked whenever the

contact between teacher and individual student comes about as a result of such directive statements.

(NOTE: It is highly unusual for a student to issue a command to the teacher, although it could happen in the case of hostile or aggressive students. Therefore, directives are included in the teacher-initiated columns, but not in the student-initiated columns. If this should happen during an observation you should describe the incident in the descriptive notes.)

Examples of directives are: "John, please sit down." "Martha, take this note to the office." "Billy, pass your paper to the front." If the teacher says, "Class get quiet." this is not coded in this column because the directive is addressed to the group and not to an individual student."

a. Academic (Ac): The content has to do with academic work only.

T: "Marcia (student may be named or designated in some way), read this paragraph."

T: "Work this problem on the board."

T: "Add three points to this and leave the $ sign off."

b. Procedural (Pr): The content has to do with getting some administrative task done.

T: "Beverly, pass out these papers to group three."

T: "You may move your chair to the activity center."

c. Behavioral (Beh) (-): The content has to do with the student's deportment.

T: "John, sit down and get to work!"

B. Teacher-initiated/Questions (Q): Questions are likely to be common during class lectures that include discussion. Teachers may intersperse questions to check for understanding, to alert the class that they may be called on, to have students supply answers, or simply to make students think about the content. Types of questions can range from simple fact questions that require the student to supply a one word answer: "What color is the balloon in this picture?" to more complex, higher-order questions that require students to speculate or think about a process: "What would happen if we put the paper strip into this solution?" Such questioning is likely to occur during explanations, lectures, reading circle, or anytime the teacher is conducting a formal lesson with the class. They can also occur when the teacher is circulating around the room checking student work. Likewise, students frequently pose questions of the teacher in order to clarify directions. The observer will see this most often when students approach the teacher to clarify the content of an assignment.

a. Questions/Academic:

T: "What is the character's name?"

T: "Have you had an experience similar to the one in the story?"

T: "How did you get the answer to this problem?"

b. Questions/Procedural:

T: "Do you have a pencil?"

T: "When are you supposed to go to the resource room?"

c. Questions/Behavioral:

T: "Do you think you can push in your chair quietly?"

T: "What are you supposed to be working on now?"

C. Teacher-initiated/Comments (C): Comments are spontaneous statements or contributions offered by either the teacher or an individual student that are not responses to a question. Student comments are common in some classrooms, particularly during sharing time. Students frequently raise their hands to offer observations or to report their experiences. Teachers also offer comments to individual students most often during individual seatwork or when evaluating student work. Examples: "Kevin, this is neat work." "Mary, you are improving." Comments differ from directives in that they do not require the student to make some immediate change either in behavior or demeanor.

1. Academic contacts: To code either a teacher or student contact in this category, the interaction has to deal with academic work the student may be doing. This includes explanations of the steps in completing an assignment, definitions of terms, processes involved in working a problem, sounding out a word, etc. Students may approach the teacher and ask for clarification or explanation of a problem. A student may

hold up his/her hand during a class discussion and question or make a comment about the substance of the lesson.

Comment/academic:

T: "This word has an 'ed' at the end because it is past tense."

2. Procedural contacts: These contacts refer to questions or comments about how to get things done. They are usually confined to administrative routines or any daily business of the classroom i.e. asking or instructing a student to pass out papers, go to the office for a message, or collect the crayolas.

Comment/procedural:

T: "John, you should be on page 3."

3. Behavioral contacts: Teacher is usually attempting to reinforce some type of classroom behavior or deportment (i.e. "Mary, you have been quiet and you have not bothered your neighbors."), or to correct or chastise a student's classroom behavior (i.e. "Chris, I'm warning you for the last time. Stop talking and get to work."). As noted, behavioral contacts can be positive (+) or negative (-). If a student is criticized for behavior the observer places a (-) in the behavioral column. If on the other hand a student is praised for something a (+) is placed in the column. Neutral comments are shown with a check mark.

B. STUDENT-INITIATED CONTACTS

I. Student-initiated/Questions: Students may raise their hands

to ask questions publicly during discussion or privately when they need the teacher's help. This most often occurs during seatwork after students have been released to do assignments or work in workbooks.

a. Academic: These contacts have to do with the subject matter content the students are working with. If the contact is private, the observer may infer that it is academic in nature, if the teacher looks at the student's paper and appears to comment on that. (NOTE: If the observer cannot tell whether or not the contact is academic, a checkmark is placed in the Procedural column. We want to be very certain that a student's contact is academic before it is coded as such.)

b. Procedural: These contacts deal with any administrative matters that may be occurring. Students may also approach the teacher to ask permission to go to the restroom, water fountain, office, etc.

II. Student-initiated/Comments: Students may also offer information, share something that has happened, tell a story, etc. Again as in the other categories this may be public or private.

a. Academic: A student may share something with the class that is related to the assignment or the class lesson. Several students may each volunteer an opinion or relate something to the class.

b. Procedural: This category is the same as the one above except that the comments relate to classroom routines or administrative tasks, not subject matter related.

CHECKING CLASSROOM ACTIVITY RECORD

Before turning in the Classroom Activity Records for an observation. CHECK THEM CAREFULLY for accuracy, completeness, and readability. Clean them up, add information, or make clarifying notes as needed. The following steps should be followed in checking every Classroom Activity Record before it is turned in:

1. Check the ID field on every page to be sure that all blanks are complete and that the ID fields on all of the pages are uniform.

2. Make sure you have not left off any Activity Codes and that the codes used are accurate for the activities described in the notes. Review the definitions of the codes again. If you are not sure about how an activity should be categorized, make a note so that it can be dealt with by the checker.

3. The Number of Minutes beside each Activity Code must equal the difference between the beginning time for that activity and the beginning time noted for the next Activity Code in the column.

b. Procedural: This category is the same as the one above except that the comments relate to classroom routines or administrative tasks, not subject matter related.

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3. The Number of Minutes beside each Activity Code must equal the difference between the beginning time for that activity and the beginning time noted for the next Activity Code in the column.

4. Be sure all SER's are complete.

5. Make sure that for each coded activity the Descriptive Notes indicate what the students are actually doing and the location and activities of the teacher.

6. Check to see that the ending of the last activity is indicated by the word "end" or "dismiss" in the Activity Code column.

7. Be sure ending time is noted in the Time Points column.

8. Review the Teacher-Student Contact section. Make sure that each line of coding is complete i.e. there should be three symbols (B or G) and (+ or -) or checkmarks for each line. If there is not, you have failed to categorize a contact completely.

9. Check to make sure all lines of coding "make sense". For example, a student-initiated directive to the teacher that is behaviorally negative (-) would be a curious combination; if it is accurate, it would need explanation.

References

Emmer, E., Sanford, J., Clements, B., & Martin, J. (1981, September). The design of the Junior High Management Improvement Study. Rept. No. 6150, Austin, TX: Research & Development Center for Teacher Education, The University of Texas.

Evertson, C., Emmer, E., Clements, B., & Sanford, J. (1980, July). Observer training manual: Classroom Management Improvement Study (CMIS). Austin, TX: Research & Development for Teacher Education, The University of Texas.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY RECORD

Teacher #_____ School #_____ Subject:_____ Date_____

Students _____ # Adults_____ Observer #_____ Page____of____

Act. Code	Elpsd Min.	Time Pts.	DESCRIPTIVE NOTES	Student Engagement
			1.	Time:
			2.	#of Students
			3.	Def. on-task
			4.	Prob. on-task
			5.	Off-task
			6.	Waiting
			7.	
			8.	
			9.	Student Engagement
			10.	Time:
			11.	# of Students
			12.	Def. on-task
			13.	Prob. on-task
			14.	Off-task
			15.	Waiting
			16.	
			17.	Student Engagement
			18.	Time:
			19.	# of Students
			20.	Def. on-task
				Prob. on-task
				Off-task
				Waiting

TEACHER-STUDENT CONTACTS

T.-Initiated						S.-Initiated			
D	Q	C	AC	PR	BEH	Q	C	AC	PRI